

5-1995

## Under the Dome - May 1995

McKissick Museum--University of South Carolina

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/dome>



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

University of South Carolina, "McKissick Museum - Under the Dome, May 1995". <http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/dome/33/>

This Newsletter is brought to you by the McKissick Museum at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Under the Dome, McKissick Museum Newsletter by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact [dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu).



# UNDER THE DOME

MCKISSICK MUSEUM - THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

VOLUME 5

MAY 1995

ISSUE 2



Split Oak Baskets

## Handed On: Folkcrafts in Southern Life

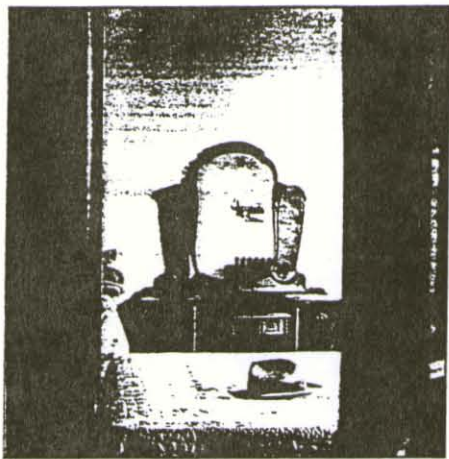
Courtesy of the Atlanta History Center

June 25 through October 1, 1995

---

## Sea Island Series/Africa Series

May 14 through June 25



The *Sea Island Series* and *Africa Series* by Carrie Mae Weems takes visitors along as the artist quests for identity and ethnic history. Like many of us who undertake a crucial spiritual journey, Weems found herself on a physical journey as well. Those journeys have led her to the discovery of deep African roots in the Sea Islands off the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, where the descendants of slaves still

preserve the remnants of a rich Gullah culture. Because the Gullah regions were located in remote coastal islands which were geographically isolated from the mainland and its white inhabitants, the Gullah people were able to maintain strong connections to their African heritage.

Traces of Africa can still be found in the language, foodways and rituals of the Sea Islands people. It is through these rich remains that Weems, in the *Sea Island Series*, dispassionately documents and comments on the clash of cultures and the growth of development now threatening to choke out this country's deepest African roots. Then through a series of inscriptions on everyday dinner plates, she offers the recurring theme, "went looking for Africa," which are re-joined by such responses as "and found Africa here at a profile angle in my mother's living-room." Do not discount these old well-worn plates—they have seen and heard the passing of generations, the stories of old, the kinship that endures, the ties that bind. Weems searches and finds her ancestry both far and near to heart and hearth.

In the *Africa Series*, Weems' quest took her to Africa itself, then returned her to the Sea Island shores. The two series of work tell her story of spiritual searching, yet together they form a whole even more significant than the parts.

### EXHIBITIONS

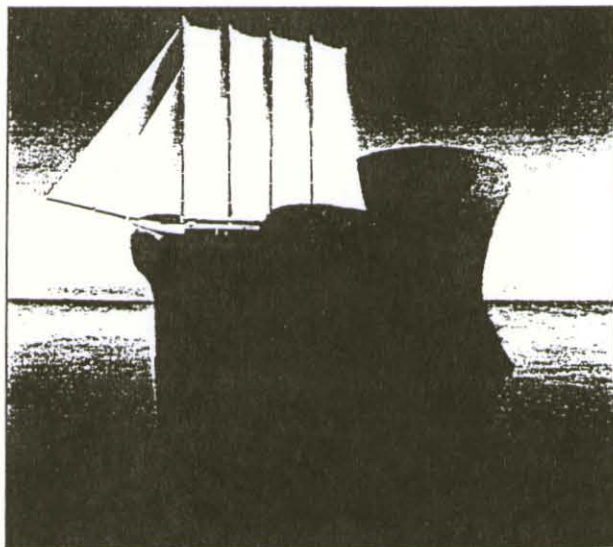
## This Is Not An Endowed Chair

through June 11, 1995

The best seats in town were reserved April 27 and 28 as McKissick Museum presented its third annual fundraiser exhibition, *This Is Not An Endowed Chair*. From the luncheon, with a lecture by John Stair of Sotheby's on April 27, to the festive gala and sale of fabulous chair creations on April 28, it was truly a successful event. Chaired by William and Kappy Hubbard, *This Is Not An Endowed Chair* was the product of thirty tireless volunteers who created a "chair" extravaganza. Through corporate sponsorship from Nelson, Mullins, Riley and Scarborough; The State; WTCB/B106.7 FM; Southern Bell; Chernoff/Silver & Associates; Mary Clowney Antiques and Interiors; The AD Company; Crowson-Stone Printing Co.; Laidlaw Environmental, INC.; Letter Perfect Communications; non(e) such; and Mr. and Mrs. O. Stanley Smith, the Museum was able to add a significant amount to the endowment from *This Is Not An Endowed Chair*. The "chair" exhibit remains on display at McKissick until June 11, 1995 and any unsold artworks may be purchased through that date. Thanks to all who supported the "chair" and please mark your calendars and plan to attend next year's "chair" event in the spring of 1996.

Above:  
Carrie Mae Weems  
"Sea Island Series" 1992  
(hat on bed/shoes under bed)  
two silver prints, edition of ten  
each panel: 20" x 20"

Right:  
Untitled, by Ed Wimberly







## COLLECTIONS

## Collections

One of the wonderful new acquisitions McKissick Museum has recently received is a Victorian-era crazy quilt donated by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Shearouse of Columbia. The Museum was especially fortunate to receive the quilt because it is an excellent example of a late 19th century crazy quilt and is in excellent condition. The quilt was pieced by Mrs. Shearouse's grandmother and presented to her son, Emmet C. King, on his 21st birthday. Mr. King later went on to seek his fortune as a stage actor in New York City. He acted in a number of theatrical productions and also later performed in some of the early movies. As an older gentleman, he was briefly featured in one of the pre-war scenes of the movie, *Gone With The Wind*.

The quilt is made from individual blocks of fabric pieces such as satins, silks and velvets basted together. Several different sets of initials and female names are embroidered on the quilt indicating that some of Mr. King's female friends contributed to the project. An array of intricate stitching patterns and embroidered images and symbols adorn the quilt and illustrate the diversity in needlework skills. The focal point of

the quilt is the center blue satin square with the embroidered initials "ECK" and the dates 1865 and 1886 documenting the years of Mr. King's birth and his 21st birthday.

The popularity of crazy quilts was a national "craze" during the late 19th century, especially with ladies from well-to-do families. Remnants from silk ties and other fine fabrics were eagerly sought by women to create their own quilt masterpieces. Women's magazines featured articles on crazy quilts with stitching patterns and design ideas. Because of these magazine articles, the same symbols and motifs are found on quilts from all over the country.

Crazy quilts were never meant to be used as quilts but were made primarily for decoration and also to show a woman's handiwork and creativity. The fragile silks and hand painted materials that were used could never withstand extended use or any type of washing. Often the quilts were composed of blocks made by different quilters to be given to someone as a sign of affection or as an honorary gift. For a young man, such as Mr. King, to be presented with a crazy quilt was considered an honor and it was usually proudly displayed in their home.

Above:  
Collections manager Karen  
Swager and docent Mary  
Dannerbeck display new  
Museum acquisition.





## Security/Computer Manager Joins McKissick

Diane Eckweiler joined the staff at McKissick Museum in January 1995 as the new Security/Information Systems Manager. She comes to us from the State Museum where she was the communications operator in the Safety and Security Department. With a background in Art History and computers, Diane is currently completing an A.S. degree in computer technology at Midlands Technical College.

In addition to overseeing safety and security at McKissick, Diane is in charge of designing and managing a new computer network for the Museum. She is currently setting up a local area network to connect with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The new research capabilities available to McKissick by being able to access the Internet are very exciting. The Internet connection will benefit all areas of the Museum, especially education and col-

lections. Information about McKissick and our collections will soon be available to the public through a gopher on the Internet. We welcome Diane and her expertise to our staff.

### UPDATES

Right:  
Diane Eckweiler

Below:  
Judy Kennedy

Far Bottom:  
Man Julienne, a student in the Museum Management certificate program, is employed as a graduate assistant to the curator of exhibitions. Here, she is helping dismantle an exhibit by removing artwork from the walls.



## Membership Coordinator Retiring



A familiar face to McKissick Museum members will soon be missing. Judy Kennedy, the Museum's membership coordinator, will be retiring this summer. For seven years Judy has graciously reminded people that their memberships have lapsed, res-

cued travelers from broken-down buses and ordered thousands of finger sandwiches for exhibition receptions. She designed and has single-handedly managed the Museum's successful travel program. Before coming to McKissick, Judy directed the education program at the Columbia Museum of Art. Her calm manner and gracious smile will be greatly missed.

## Students are at the Hub of McKissick



Ever notice that the Museum seems to have quite a few students performing many of the functions that often required full-time professional staff. There are several reasons for this, the main being that McKissick Museum is a teaching institution. As part of the Museum's mission, McKissick provides graduate level students and museum professionals the opportunity to earn a certificate in Museum Management.

The benefits of actively employing students are twofold.

The student receives a substantial reduction in tuition as well as significant hands-on experience in the day-to-day opera-

tions of a museum. In addition, there is the modest paycheck of a part-time job. This experience supplements the required coursework, totaling 18 credit hours, that the student must complete to receive the certificate. These courses include instruction in the overall administration of a museum, the curatorial operations of a museum, a topical readings course, an independent study, and a 6-hour internship.

The Museum benefits by having interested and hardworking assistants in such areas as collections management, educational programming, and exhibition preparation. Last year alone, over 70 students enrolled in Museum Management courses. And annually, McKissick offers 8 - 10 graduate assistantships with priority going to those students seeking the certificate.





## Elegant Egg Invitation Wins Awards

The invitation for McKissick's 1994 Elegant Egg fundraiser received recognition by both the South Carolina chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (SCPRSA) and the Columbia Advertising and Marketing Federation (CAMF).

The invitation was honored in SCPRSA's Mercury Awards competition with a certificate of merit in the Silver Wing direct mail

category. It was cited for its unusual approach and success in attracting more than 600 attendees to the '94 luncheon and gala.

CAMF's annual Addy Awards gave the invitation a citation of merit in the special event material category.

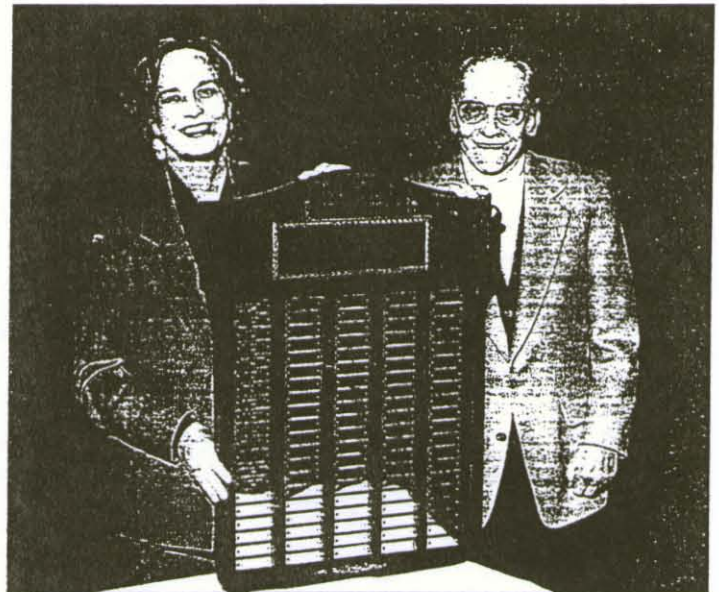
Susan Craig of Susan Craig Design provided the creative art design of the invitation, with copywriting by Sharmin Hill of SB Hill.

## AWARDS

Below:  
Museum director Lynn Robertson presents docent Dr. Rudy Laub with the Cahan Award.

## Docents Honored

On February 14th McKissick Museum honored the docents who freely share their time and many talents with the staff and visitors of McKissick at the annual Docent-Staff Valentine Appreciation Luncheon. Eleven docents received McKissick Museum Memberships for 100 hours of service to the Museum in 1994. They were: Jeanie Castle, Mary Dannerbeck, Frank Hill, Robin Holloway, Ann Klingenhagen, Rudy Laub, Muriel Lesselbaum, Mary Lucas, Warren Smith, Peggie West and Hugh Wilson. The Mildred Cahan Memorial Award, recognizing docents who have completed 500 hours of service to McKissick, was given to Dr. Rudy Laub. His name was inscribed on the award plaque which hangs in the Museum. Dr. Laub works at the first-floor desk providing information and help to the visitors of McKissick.



Docents are an indispensable and valuable part of McKissick Museum's operation. We welcome anyone who is interested to join the docent core. Training is ongoing and a wide variety of placements are available. For more information please contact the docent coordinator.



# Handed-On

## Passes Along Southern Folk Traditions

### FEATURE

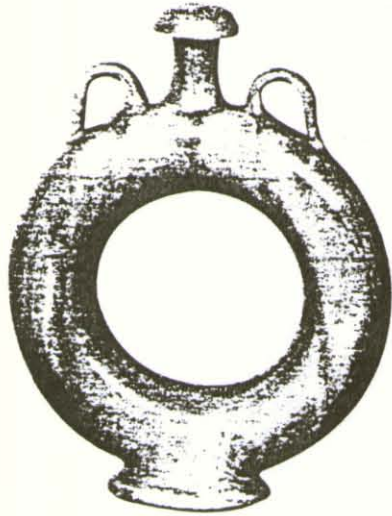
In 1966 a professor at Georgia State University decided that it was important for a survey of the folk cultures of that state to be undertaken. Many examples of traditional folk arts were quickly disappearing as the entire country became more homogeneous. Dr. John Burrison and his folklore students began avidly collecting a broad range of material objects and documenting their creation and use within traditional communities. "This was done with a sense of urgency, for older examples of folk crafts were being neglected or destroyed, while some active, rural-based crafts were in danger of disappearing as the South was becoming modernized. I soon realized that a representative collection, properly interpreted, could teach much about the arts and history of ordinary Southerners," said Burrison.

The exhibition *Handed On: Folk Crafts in Southern Life*, on view at McKissick from June 25 through October 1, is a prelude to a permanent installation at the Atlanta History Center of the collection amassed by Burrison over his years of studying Southern folk art. Many of the objects in the collection were made in Georgia, but some are from neighboring states to better understand how Georgia's craft traditions relate to the entire lower Southeast. In order to trace both the continuity and changes in these traditions, the objects span the early 19th century to the present.

John Burrison gathered numerous items for the exhibition, such as these, during his examination of Southern folk art traditions.







There was a time in the South when most material possessions in the countryside were made either at home or by community specialists who sold their products. These domestic and professional craftspeople learned their designs and production techniques mainly from older family members; in addition, enslaved African-Americans were trained to produce much of what was needed for plantation life in the antebellum era.

Where once these handskills furnished the necessities of living for farming folk of the region, their

products now decorate the homes of city dwellers and suburbanites throughout the nation and help connect us to the past. The South remains one of the richest folk-craft regions in the country, where the Age of Hands still lives.

The exhibition *Handed-On* presents a rich array of Southeastern folk art presented in reference to five cultural groups Burrison identifies as instrumental to the creation of a Southern way of life. It is also a regional outlook he sees continuing because of strong speech and food traditions.





## Child Alert! Are You Ready for Summer?



Junior Archaeologists (Rising 3rd through 5th grades)	June 19 - 23
Environmental Explorers for Girls (Rising 1st through 3rd grades)	June 26 - 30
Environmental Explorers (Rising 1st through 3rd grades)	July 10 - 14
Art Discovery! I (Rising 1st through 3rd grades)	July 17 - 21
Art Discovery! II (Rising 3rd through 5th grades)	July 24 - 28
Adventure Columbia! (Rising 3rd through 5th grades)	July 31 - August 4

We hope you are ready for a great summer because our terrific summer camps are ready for you! Dig into history and become a junior archaeologist or create your own masterpiece for a special art exhibition. Discover how things operate in our city and meet some cool new friends in the City of Columbia. Or take a hike with us and find out how the environment really works. Whatever your interest, McKissick will challenge and excite you with fun field trips and awesome activities. Sign up now!

All summer programs run from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. Fees include all materials, snacks and a McKissick sports bottle. See schedule below.

### EDUCATION

## McKissick Concert Series—Don't Miss It!

McKissick is bringing in local music talent for a series of free concerts this fall. Previous events have been very popular and included such wonderful musicians as Jebel, the Soul Mites, Bryan Wade, Danielle Howle, and Treadmill Acoustic. Designed to capitalize on Columbia's talented musicians, the concerts are free of charge and open to everyone. "Columbia has a wealth of professional music talent and we have a wonderful opportunity to showcase some of that talent at the Museum," explains assistant director and curator of educational services Deanna Kerrigan. "Everyone has a great time—our staff, the musicians, and most of all the audience. There are not many opportunities to see these musicians outside of local bars. We are offering a smoke-free, alcohol-free environment where people can come and relax. We do, of course, tempt them with gourmet coffee and wonderful desserts!"

Interested in learning more?  
Contact the Museum for a list of fall concerts.



Danielle Howle delighted the audience at the first McKissick Unplugged concert this Spring.



## Jane's Journeys

In January I returned to West Point, Georgia, former home of Mrs. M. J. McAfee who wrote what appears to have been the firstbook on pine-needle basket making. An archivist at the local library had contacted me about a Mrs. Florine Stanley Allen who had personally known Mrs. McAfee. As Mrs. Allen is presently in her 90s, I was quick to arrange an interview.

By the time Mrs. Allen came to know her, Mrs. McAfee was living with her daughter, Mrs. Edwin Lang, and the two had started a private grade school in the Lang home. Mrs. Allen had attended this school from kindergarten through the second grade, at which point she transferred to the local public school. She recalled crafts being part of what they did at school, but emphasis was placed on learning the 3Rs—reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Mrs. Allen's father was a machinist at the textile mill owned and operated by the Lang family. According to her, the Lang family had emigrated to the United States from Leeds, England. Commenting on the fact that the wife and mother-in-law of a prominent family in town would start a school, Mrs. Allen said, "They were English and the English work." Her parents paid five dollars a month for her to attend school at the Lang home.

Mrs. Allen didn't recall anything about Mrs. McAfee or Mrs. Lang's basket making. The one pine-needle basket that her mother passed down to her, however, was made very much in the style of those that Mrs. McAfee made. Approximately nine inches in diameter and sewn with raffia, the basket figured a decorative pattern of triangles colored in what was now a dull red. The basket originally had belonged to Mrs. Allen's grandmother, who died October 21, 1925. It was made and presented as a gift to her by her niece, Carrie Clark, a woman who never married and who continued to live with and care for her mother, Rhoda Stanley Clark.

Mrs. Allen remembered cousin Carrie as a lively and enterprising woman, an ac-

complished pianist who earned money from any number of ventures. Carrie made candy for sale and was known locally as a decorator. People often hired her to decorate for weddings. At one time, Carrie and her mother ran a boarding house and fed people who worked on the railroad. "Carrie loved to fish," Mrs. Allen recalled fondly, adding that neither Carrie nor Carrie's mother were "money crazy." "They got what they had by cooking and feeding people. You can always do that," she observed.

Cousin Carrie also worked occasionally with her mother and sister for a local department store. The store purchased manufactured carpets by the roll, and would hire the three women to sew up strips to make rugs sized specifically for customers' homes. According to Mrs. Allen, the three women got \$2.00 for every rug they sewed. Mrs. Allen's own mother sewed clothing for other people. Together with a couple of neighbors, Mrs. Allen's mother set up a sewing business in a room of her home, and charged people \$2.00 for a dress.

Cousin Carrie apparently learned to make pine-needle baskets when she was fairly young. It seems she made baskets as gifts, not for sale. While Mrs. Allen was not able to confirm how Carrie learned to make pine-needle baskets, it seems not unlikely that she learned from Mrs. McAfee.

Admittedly, I did not find out a great deal more about Mrs. McAfee than I already knew. What I did come to better understand were the many ways single and married women of fairly well-to-do families worked together and independently to earn part or all of their living at a time when "ladies" didn't work outside the home. In fact, many respectable women did work outside the home but more as independent contractors than as full-time employees. They also were remarkably resourceful in their efforts to turn a profit on work women traditionally had performed in the home, like sewing and cooking.

## FOLKLIFE





## Jane's Journeys II

### FOLKLIFE

I combined my visit to West Point with a trip to the National Archives in East Point, Georgia. My aim was to survey the Indian Arts and Crafts Board materials that had been regionalized when I was in D.C. last year, and to have a look at the papers of Arthur E. Morgan. Morgan had headed up the Tennessee Valley Authority back in the 1930s from which the Southern Highlanders, Inc., developed. The Southern Highlanders were an early effort at cooperatively marketing crafts made in the region. The organization evolved and survives, in part, today as the Southern Highland Handicrafts Guild.

Unfortunately, most of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board materials dated from the late 1940s. The Southeastern Crafts Revival Project's focus is the period between the World Wars. While it was interesting to get a sense of how crafts among Native Americans developed after 1945, I scanned the materials for information they might provide about craft revival efforts among tribal groups in the Southeast previous to that time. In the 1960s, an article written by Doris M. Coulter, an art teacher in the Cherokee Elementary School, indicated that the United States government had been involved in promoting crafts among Native Americans for much longer than I'd thought. Some 25 years after the Revolutionary War, the government began annual distributions of looms and spinning wheels among Cherokee women, and arranged for them to be taught how to spin and weave. At some point in the early 19th century, the government later took direct control. Crafts apparently became an increasingly insignificant component of the school curriculum until, in 1930, the Bureau of Indian Affairs hired Miss Ethel Garnett to teach weaving in the Cherokee high school. Reflecting on the sporadic nature of craft instruction among the Cherokee, Coulter noted, "Why craft and indus-

trial courses have come and gone many times during all these years is a great mystery." The exhibit that develops from this research hopefully will begin to decipher this mystery.

The Morgan papers suggested the ambitiousness and idealism that informed many New Deal programs. The Tennessee Valley Authority Program for Cooperative Work aimed not only "to give skill and understanding in the uses of mechanical power," but "to show the value and the necessity for the use of this power in cooperative enterprises so that the resultant to everyone shall be a greater abundance of the necessities and the luxuries of life...and to show to everyone the spiritual values that leisure time will give—leisure time as contrasted with the misery and want that follow unemployment." Here was a program that sought to direct the uses to which a new technology would be put. The concern seemed to be that electricity and the mechanical power it made possible would be harnessed by and for the people to work together collectively to better both their material conditions and their spiritual lives. From the start, the Program envisioned creating a cooperative city complete with "model homes" in which "will be taught...home industries including canning, sewing, rug making, chair caning and embroidery," as well as an electrical repair shop, an automotive repair shop, and metal and woodworking shops. The idea was to put into place the infrastructure for industries that would employ people once the construction work associated with the dams was completed. The utopian nature of the social-mindedness that inspired this program, and that the program aimed to cultivate among ordinary citizens was extraordinary. One wonders if and how much of that social-mindedness persists in the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild and might account for that organization's longevity.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Address:

McKissick Museum, The University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208

### Telephone:

(803) 777-7251 - all offices; recorded general information and answering machine during non-public hours. FAX: (803) 777-2829.

### Admission:

Free. Public entrance via the historic Horseshoe of the University of South Carolina, facing Sumter Street. Access for disabled visitors is the side entrance of the building via the little Horseshoe at the intersection of Pendleton & Bull Streets.

### Hours:

Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.;  
Saturday & Sunday, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Closed  
all major holidays.

### Parking:

The Museum is within walking distance of metered street parking. Metered parking is also available in the lower level of the Pendleton Street Garage, located at the corner of Pendleton and Pickens Streets.

### Talks and Tours:

Docent-conducted exhibition tours are available. To schedule a tour, please call the Community Services Department at least two weeks in advance. Gallery talks and lectures are free.

### Members Program:

Membership revenues and special fund raising activities provide essential support for Museum programs. Members receive advance announcements about exhibitions, programs, travel opportunities and special events, as well as discounts on publications. For more information, please contact the Membership Coordinator.

### Volunteers:

The Community Services Department coordinates docent training and programs. Volunteers are needed for education and other support activities. Please direct inquiries to the Volunteer Coordinator.

### Contributions:

Gifts or bequests to the Museum, whether works of art or money, are essential to the development of programs and collections. Contributions are tax deductible within IRS guidelines.



Non Profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit #766  
Columbia, SC